AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace all prior versions and listings of claims with the following listing of claims.

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for identifying synergistic opportunities among users within a computer network by matching users with a common user-generated topic of interest, the computer-implemented method comprising:

receiving a topic of interest and associated information from a first user on a user interface on a first computer;

creating a group e-mail address, a virtual team workspace, or both based on the topic and the associated information received from the first user;

storing the received topic of interest and the associated information on a storage medium in communication with the first computer;

monitoring computing activities of a second user by a software monitoring module;

determining if the second user appears to be interested in the received topic based on the monitored activities of the second user and based on the associated information; and

responsive to a determination that the second user is interested in the received topic:

notifying the second user of the existence of the received topic ~~if it appears that the second user is interested in the received topic~~, and

presenting an option to the second user for being added to the group e-mail address, the virtual team workspace, or both.

2.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the monitoring the computing activities of the second user comprises monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user.

3.   (Cancelled)

4.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user comprises retrieving from an e-mail server one or more e-mail messages addressed to the second user and/or sent by the second user and examining the contents of those e-mail messages.

5.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the monitoring the computing activities of the second user comprises examining one or more instant messages sent to and/or from the second user.

6.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the monitoring the computing activities of the second user comprises monitoring one or more search request messages sent from the second user.

7.   (Cancelled)

8.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
        determining based on an interest selection whether the second user desires to receive information about the received topic after notifying the second user of the existence of the received topic, and if so, sending information about the received topic to the second user.

9-11.   (Cancelled)

12.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
        determining, based on a response of the second user to the presented option, an interest selection whether the second user selected to be added to [[a]]the group e-mail address, the and/or virtual team workspace, or both associated with the received topic, and if so:

                adding the second user to the group e-mail address if it is determined that
        the second user selected to be added to the group e-mail address; and

adding the second user to the virtual team workspace if it is determined that

the second user selected to be added to the virtual team workspace.

13.   (Cancelled)

14.   (Currently Amended) A system configured to identify synergistic opportunities

among users within a computer network by matching users with a common user-generated

topic of interest, the system comprising:

    a user interface on a first computer configured to receive a topic of interest and

associated information from a first user;

    an email-workspace creation module configured to create a group e-mail address

based on the topic and the associated information received, via the user interface, from the

first user;

    a storage device in communication with the first computer and configured to store

the received topic and associated information;

    a software monitoring module configured to monitor computing activities of a

second user;

    a determination module configured to determine if the second user appears to be

interested in the received topic based on the monitored activities of the second user and

based on the associated information; [[and]]

    a notification module configured to notify the second user of the existence of the

received topic if it appears that the second user is interested in the received topic; and

    an option interface configured to present an option to the second user for being

added to the group e-mail address.

15.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein the software monitoring

module is configured to monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the

second user.

16.   (Cancelled)

17.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the software monitoring module that is configured to monitor one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user is further configured to retrieve from an e-mail server one or more e-mail messages addressed to the second user and/or sent by the second user and to examine the contents of those e-mail messages.

18.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein the software monitoring module is configured to examine one or more instant messages sent to and/or from the second user.

19.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein the software monitoring module is configured to monitor one or more search request messages sent from the second user.

20.   (Cancelled)

21.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, further comprising:
        a determination module configured to determine whether the second user desires to receive information about the received topic after notifying the second user of the existence of the received topic.

22-24. (Cancelled)

25.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 14, further comprising:
        a determination module configured to determine, based on a response of the second user to the option presented to the second user using the option interface, whether the second user selected to be added to [[a]]the group e-mail address and/or virtual team associated with the received topic; and
        an e-mail additional module configured to add the second user to the group e-mail address, based on a determination by the determination module if it is determined that the second user selected to be added to the group e-mail address; and

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~~a virtual team modification module configured to add the second user to the virtual team if it is determined that the second user selected to be added to the virtual team.~~

26.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon a computer program for identifying synergistic opportunities among users within a computer network by matching users with a common user-generated topic of interest, the computer program comprising a set of instructions which when executed by a computer machine cause the computer machine to perform the steps of:

receiving a topic of interest and associated information from a first user on a user interface on a first computer;

creating a group e-mail address, a virtual team workspace, or both based on the topic and the associated information received from the first user on the first computer;

storing the received topic and the associated information on a storage medium in communication with the first computer;

monitoring computing activities of a second user by a software monitoring module;

determining if the second user appears to be interested in the received topic based on the monitored activities of the second user and based on the associated information; and

responsive to a determination that the second user is interested in the received topic:

notifying the second user of the existence of the received topic ~~if it appears that the second user is interested in the received topic~~, and

presenting an option to the second user for being added to the group e-mail address, the virtual team workspace, or both.

27.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 26, wherein the step of monitoring the computing activities of the second user comprises monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user.

28.   (Cancelled)

29.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 27, wherein the monitoring one or more e-mail messages sent to and/or from the second user comprises retrieving from an e-mail server one or more e-mail messages addressed to the second user and/or sent by the second user and examining the contents of those e-mail messages.

30.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 26, wherein the step of monitoring the computing activities of the second user comprises examining one or more instant messages sent to and/or from the second user.

31.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 26, wherein the step of monitoring the computing activities of the second user comprises monitoring one or more search request messages sent from the second user.

32.   (Cancelled)

33.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 26, wherein the computer machine further perform the steps of:
        determining whether the second user desires to receive information about the received topic after notifying the second user of the existence of the received topic.

34-36. (Cancelled)

37.   (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 26, wherein the computer machine further perform the steps of:
        determining, based on a response of the second user to the presented option, whether the second user selected to be added to [[a]]the group e-mail address, the and/or virtual team workspace, or both associated with the received topic;
        adding the second user to the group e-mail address if it is determined that the second user selected to be added to the group e-mail address; and

adding the second user to the virtual team_workspace if it is determined that the second user selected to be added to the virtual team_workspace.

38.   (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, wherein the associated information is selected from the group consisting of: a name of the topic, a description of the topic, one or more keywords related to the topic, the name of the first user[[;]], a reason for entering the topic, an access limitation on the topic, an expiration date associated with the topic, a name of a group e-mail address, a name of a virtual team workspace, a link to an electronic bulletin board and a link to a web page; ~~further comprising creating a group e-mail address, a virtual team workspace, or both based on the topic and the associated information received from the first user~~.

39.   (Cancelled)

40.   (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, further comprising:

        determining if the second user is authorized to be notified of the topic.

41.   (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, wherein the software monitoring module is located on a computer of the second user, on a network node in communication with the computer of the second user, or on a server in communication with the computer of the second user.

42.   (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, further comprising:

        monitoring computing activities of a third user by the software monitoring module;

        determining if the third user appears to be interested in the topic based on the monitored activities of the third user and based on the associated information; and

        notifying the third user of the existence of the topic if it appears that the third user is interested in the topic.

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43.   (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, wherein the associated information comprises an expiration date for the received topic of interest; the method further comprising:

removing the received topic of interest and the associated information from the storage medium in communication with the first computer when a current date reaches the expiration date.

44.   (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method according to claim 1, wherein the associated information comprises an expiration date for the received topic of interest; the method further comprising:

archiving the received topic of interest and the associated information on the storage medium in communication with the first computer when a current date reaches the expiration date.

45.   (New) A system configured to identify synergistic opportunities among users within a computer network by matching users with a common user-generated topic of interest, the system comprising:

a user interface on a first computer configured to receive a topic of interest and associated information from a first user;

an email-workspace creation module configured to create a virtual team workspace based on the topic and the associated information received, via the user interface, from the first user;

a storage device in communication with the first computer and configured to store the received topic and associated information;

a software monitoring module configured to monitor computing activities of a second user;

a determination module configured to determine if the second user appears to be interested in the received topic based on the monitored activities of the second user and based on the associated information;

a notification module configured to notify the second user of the existence of the received topic, based on a determination that the second user is interested in the received topic; and

an option interface configured to present an option to the second user for being added to the virtual team workspace.

46.   (New) The system of claim 45, further comprising:

a determination module configured to determine, based on a response of the second user to the option presented to the second user using the option interface, whether the second user selected to be added to the virtual team workspace; and

a virtual team modification module configured to add the second user to the virtual team workspace based on a determination by the determination module that the second user selected to be added to the virtual team workspace.